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Classical Swine Fever:

Still a Threat



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Classical swine fever (CSF), also known as hog cholera, is a highly contagious viral disease of swine found worldwide. CSF was eradicated from the United States in 1976 after a 15-year effort by the industry and State and Federal governments. If a similar eradication effort had to be mounted today, the estimated cost to the Government would exceed \$500 million.

In the spring and summer of 1997, outbreaks of CSF were confirmed in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Both countries had eradicated the disease in the early 1980's. Also in 1997, several European countries, including the Netherlands and Belgium, experienced outbreaks and suffered heavy losses. These outbreaks have animal health officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) concerned that CSF could spread to U.S. swine herds. While CSF does not cause illness in people, economic losses to swine producers would be severe if the disease were to become established again in this country.



Dutch authorities spent nearly \$2 billion to eradicate CSF in 1997.

Transmission

The most common method of transmission is direct contact between healthy swine and those infected with CSF. The disease can also be transmitted through contact with body secretions and excrement from infected animals. Healthy pigs coming into contact with CSF virus-contaminated vehicles, pens, feed, or clothing may contract the disease. Birds, flies, and humans can physically carry the virus from infected to healthy swine. Swine owners can inadvertently cause infection through feeding their herds uncooked food wastes containing pork scraps from CSF-infected hogs.

Signs

The clinical signs of CSF vary with the severity of the infection. There are three forms of the disease: acute, chronic, and mild.

- The acute form of CSF is highly virulent, causing persistent fevers that can raise body temperatures as high as 107 °F (41.7 °C). Other signs of the acute form include convulsions and lack of appetite. Affected pigs will pile or huddle up together. Signs of CSF may not be apparent for several days following infection. Death usually occurs within 5 to 14 days following the onset of illness.
- The chronic form of CSF causes similar clinical signs in affected swine, but the signs are less severe than in the acute form. Discoloration of the abdominal skin and red splotches around the ears and extremities often occur. Pigs with chronic CSF can live for more than 100 days after the onset of infection. During that time, they can infect healthy swine.
- The mild or clinically inapparent form of CSF seldom results in noticeable clinical signs. Affected pigs suffer short periods of illness followed by periods of recovery. The mild strain may cause small litter size, stillbirths, and other reproductive failures. High mortality during weaning may also indicate the presence of this mild strain of CSF. Even these swine, which show no signs of infection, are contagious.



Pigs tend to huddle together as if cold when infected with CSF.

How Animal Health Officials Protect U.S. Animals

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) maintains a constant vigil against the entry of foreign animal diseases, such as CSF.

To ensure that pigs presented for importation are free of disease, swine from countries recognized as free of CSF can enter the United States only after a 30-day quarantine at a high-security Federal import center.



Purplish discoloration of skin is a common sign of CSF.



Matted eyes are a common sign of CSF.

Control If an Outbreak Should Strike

APHIS coordinates an emergency task force made up of Federal, State, and local officials, ready to respond immediately to any foreign disease outbreak. If an outbreak of CSF should occur, the task force would take the following actions:

- Investigate the affected farm to determine the history of illness, record the types and number of pigs infected, and collect any other information relating to the illness.
- Quarantine the affected premises and the surrounding areas, if necessary, to restrict the movement of infected and exposed animals.
- Trace all movements of swine to and from the affected premises.
- Provide laboratory services to test infected and exposed animals.
- Euthanize or depopulate and dispose of all infected and exposed animals; dispose of potentially contaminated materials like bedding and manure.
- Supervise cleaning and disinfection of the affected premises.
- Advise and assist area hog farmers if their herds are located near a quarantined area or at risk because of possible exposure.
- Increase public awareness of the outbreak and control efforts through press conferences, news releases, and public service announcements.
- Make available an onsite public information specialist to answer questions and provide updates to the media and the public.

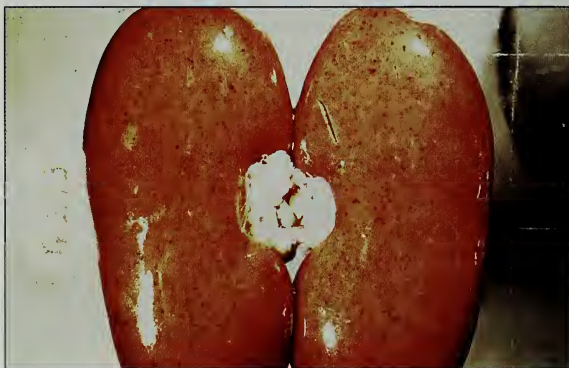


Mesenteric lymph nodes showing dark superficial hemorrhage.

How Swine Owners Can Protect Their Animals

Swine owners who suspect their pigs may have CSF should immediately contact their local veterinarian or Federal or State animal health official. Taking the following steps can help swine owners prevent this disease from becoming established in the United States:

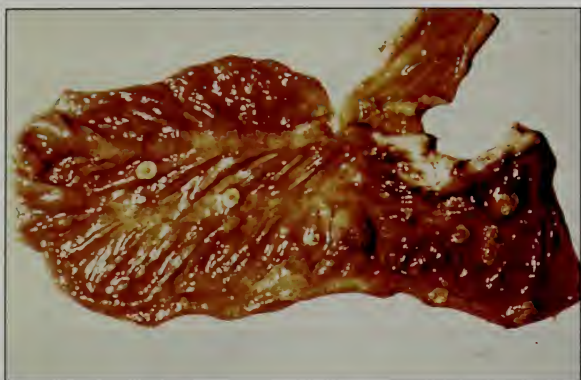
- Check animals daily for unusual signs or behaviors.
- Make sure food waste is properly heated to destroy pathogens.
- Isolate newly purchased hogs for at least 21 days.
- Isolate sick pigs until the cause of illness is determined.
- Fence property to prevent wild pigs from coming in contact with domestic herds.
- Practice standard biosecurity measures, such as cleaning and disinfecting clothing, equipment, and vehicles entering and leaving the farm.



Pinpoint hemorrhages on the kidneys are characteristic.



Hemorrhages commonly seen on the epiglottis of a CSF-infected hog.



"Button" ulcers on the lining of the intestine.

Report Suspicious Cases

Veterinarians and livestock owners who suspect an animal may have CSF or any other foreign animal disease should immediately contact State or Federal animal health authorities.

For more information, contact:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
Emergency Programs
4700 River Road, Unit 41
Riverdale, MD 20737-1231
Telephone (301) 734-8073
Fax (301) 734-7817

Current information on animal diseases and suspected outbreaks is also available on the Internet. Point your Web browser to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> to reach the APHIS home page.

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